

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE  
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## **USTR Seeks Public Comment on U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement**

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) today published a notice in the *Federal Register* seeking comments from the public on all negotiating objectives for a free trade agreement with Jordan.

Last week, President Clinton and King Abdullah II of Jordan announced that the United States and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will enter into a bilateral negotiation of a free trade agreement. These discussions will include labor and environmental issues.

“We share with Jordan a fundamental belief that trade is vital to supporting peace and stability in the Middle East and to improving the quality of life,” said U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky. “We are entering a new era of economic cooperation with Jordan, the benefits of which will contribute not only to Jordan’s economic growth, but the economic prosperity of the entire region. Jordan’s persistence and steady commitment to achieving a comprehensive peace for the region has made it an invaluable partner in the Middle East peace process.”

In addition to the *Federal Register* notice soliciting public comments from the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other interested parties, USTR has requested that the U.S. International Trade Commission conduct a study on the potential economic impact of the agreement on the United States.

The agreement will also address labor and environmental issues, and USTR will seek public input on these matters as well. In addition, pursuant to Executive Order 13141, an inter-agency team will perform an environmental review of the free trade agreement. Jordan also intends to conduct its own environmental review of the impact of the agreement.

Two-way trade between Jordan and the United States totaled \$307 million in 1999, \$276 million in U.S. exports to Jordan and \$31 million in U.S. imports from Jordan.